A Nurseryman's Success Without Irrigation

To a greater or less degree set rules govern the nursery business. So much so that it has been thought impossible to profitably grow hardy market size fruit trees on a large scale, from the pits, without irrigation. We have been doing it successfully in Van Nuys since 1910, and our thoroughly successful experience includes a healthy unirrigated walnut nursery of 42,000 trees.

We believe the secret of our success here lies in cultivation. Nature has filled this valley with a deep, soft, rich soil and watered it from some subterranean source that has not failed in the four years we have been here. By stirring the surface every two weeks the moisture is drawn to the top, by capillary attraction.

One will get some idea of the growing power of this soil without surface irrigation by following the growth of our walnut seedlings.

In February, 1914, we cut our six months' old northern black walnut seedlings off to an average of two inches under ground and grafted various varieties of English walnuts to them. As you may know, English walnut scions rarely exceed five inches in length and when the work of grafting was finished nothing could be seen in the field but 42,000 stubs the size of a pencil, poking three inches out of the ground. Today, six months from the time they were grafted, those scions, or stubs, are English walnut trees ten and twelve feet high.

Last February, after the walnut grafting was done, we planted five and a half tons of peach pits in one 25-acre field. In July, five months after planting, they had grown, without irrigation, to the height of an ordinary man's shoulder.

It is only natural to suppose that we have thoroughly gone into the future possibilities in Van Nuys soil, supported by its wonderful growing climate, and our belief in it is thoroughly substantiated each season by the thousands of bearing orchards that yearly yield their owners substantial profits.

V. N. N. Co.

An Express Messenger Becomes Chicken Specialist and Prospers

I had worked up through the rank and file of the Wells-Fargo Company till I was overland messenger, there I stuck. Hard as I tried, $1500 per year was my top, with nothing ahead that held so much as healthful encouragement. Stories were afloat about the easy money and easy life of the poultry farmer and though most of them sounded "perishable," I concluded to investigate.

That was four and a half years ago. I was buying a home then as many ambitious young men are—one of those "non-producing" burdens, "just-like-rent"—so I borrowed $500, turned the back yard into an experimental henery, stocked it with laying hens, intending to find out if chickens wisely handled would support a family and pay a profit.

From the beginning my experiments were encouraging and two years ago I bought these five acres, hired a boy to attend to the hens while I was away, and held on to my position until this last March, when I felt my chicken business would stand alone. Here's last year's answer to my three and a half years' experiments.

My 1100 hens cleared $1.58 a head above feed and labor. This includes the keep of one horse. Take out interest, taxes and our living, charging everything to the hen, and we really made $1100—and I haven't gone out of the valley for business.

I have enlarged my plant each year as the profits allowed. During the season just past we hatched 5250 eggs to the batch, our season's run was 20,000 baby chicks and 20,000 hatching eggs.

Van Nuys' soil and climate takes good care of our table by way of the garden patch. Two acres of fine fruit trees will yield profits next year, and the ground between the rows pays for the wait. Our lawn, in alfalfa, grown at the cost of a 50-foot garden hose, keeps the chickens in green stuff and our cow in costless feed.

The $500 I borrowed four and a half years ago has made us assets to the amount of $8000. I claim the $500 was put to work at the right job in the right way, and for any ordinary live man without much money there isn't anything better than Van Nuys soil, climate and limitless market.

B. R. H.

Photograph of Van Nuys in the Center of the Tract, Looking Toward the Santa Monica Mountains and the Ocean.

The Growth in Four Years of Van Nuys and of the Van Nuys-Lankershim Tract

In 1910 the Van Nuys-Lankershim tract was one vast grain and grazing field. One dirt wagon road skirted along the south side of the valley and the Southern Pacific hurried over a barren looking plain.

Today the Van Nuys-Lankershim tract is the largest successful farm tract subdivision in the world so near a large city—sixteen miles long by six miles wide, containing 47,000 acres.

There are over 200 miles of graded streets and roads in the subdivision. Over forty miles of boulevard, streets, and paved highways are brilliantly illuminated at night by ornamental electroliers.

Over one million deciduous fruit trees have been set out in the Van Nuys-Lankershim tract in three years.

In four years its assessed valuation has increased from $500,000 to $5,500,000.

The city of Van Nuys has a $50,000 grammar school completed and a $120,000 high school under way.

The First National Bank of Van Nuys has a capital of $50,000, a surplus of $5000, assets of $350,000, and has 600 depositors.

The postoffice receipts at Van Nuys for the two months, April 1st to May 31st, 1914, were $403.26, as against $239.60 for the same period in 1913.

Two churches, costing $10,000 and $8000, have been built. The Johnson Organ and Piano Manufacturing Company, the only plant of its kind on the Pacific Coast, has a large factory of white glazed brick in Van Nuys, employing one hundred men and representing an investment of $250,000.

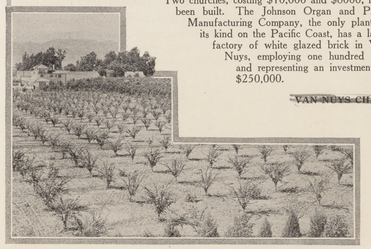
The men who opened this tract to settlement are Gen. Harrison Gray Otis, President and General Manager of the Los Angeles Times; Gen. M. H. Sherman, pioneer street railway builder of Southern California; H. J. Whitley, prominent banker and developer; O. F. Brant, General Manager Title Insurance & Trust Company, and Harry Chandler, Vice-President of the Los Angeles Times.

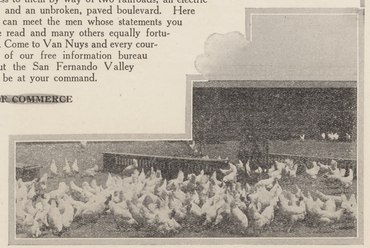
Thirty bankers and leading business men of Los Angeles later joined in this great suburban farm enterprise, to bring the San Fernando Valley, with its certainty of well-watered, fertile soil and nearby, ever-growing markets, to those who seek profitable small farms and suburban homes.

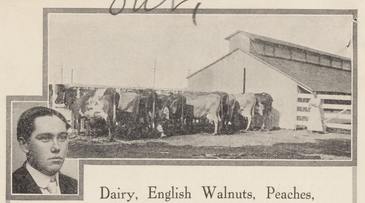
Soon after the purchase of this large body of land, one-half interest in the first townsite to be laid out was sold to W. P. Whitsett, and was opened to settlement February 22nd, 1911. The result is Van Nuys—with its churches, advanced schools and modern improvements ever drawing to it the best class of progressive citizenship.

The Van Nuys-Lankershim tract is a place that has not been falsely boasted of. Here a home-seeker can come and definitely see for himself the profitable advantage in a 5, 10 or 20-acre tract. You can know the true worth of the soil's fertility, the vastness of Los Angeles' markets, and the cheap and easy access to them by way of two railroads, an electric line, and an unbroken, paved boulevard. Here you can meet the men whose statements you have read and many others equally fortunate. Come to Van Nuys and every courtesy of our free information bureau about the San Fernando Valley will be at your command.

VAN NUYS CHAMBER OF COMMERCE







Dairy, English Walnuts, Peaches, Casabas, Garden and Chickens on Five Acres

It took $2000 aside from the price of this land to get together what I have here, and at that it does not require any "nose to the grindstone" work to make it pay.

I don't mean it isn't any work to take care of nine cows, a horse and three and a half acres of orchard and garden, because it is, but I can do the work myself and keep track of current events besides.

The cows alone clear me $150 per month—you can figure it for yourself.

I sell 90 quarts of milk a day at 10 cents per quart, and could sell more if I had it, but, at my present capacity, I collect $270 each 30 days. Feed costs me, for the horse and nine cows, $75 a month, and the $45 per month that I call my salary, just for convenience sake, keeps us in clothes and amply supplies our table.

These five acres are growing into money every day.

The wide spacing between walnut trees permit the planting of peaches that mature and yield three crops before the first bearing of the English walnuts, after which they are cut down.

Between the tree rows of this three and a half acre orchard I have planted two and a half acres of sweet potatoes that net $150 an acre, in any ordinary year, and the remaining acre, up at the east end, is in winter casabas that net any one who grows them on Van Nuys land $100 per acre.

Around the house, here and there in corners, corn and vegetables, growing without irrigation, add their luxury and increase to the whole, while 75 chickens bring up themselves and yield surprising earnings on the odds and ends from our table and feed barn.

Much can be truly said and proven of Van Nuys suburban farms. It's this strong working combination—sub-moistened soil and 365 growing days climate, added to the ever-increasing and versatile market of Los Angeles and suburbs—that makes this Van Nuys proposition appeal to the young man with a little money and a determination to turn it over several times a year at a profit.

H. P.

Two City Girls Make Home and Living on Two and One-Half Acres

It seems as though it costs less to regain one's health in California than anywhere else. Our experience in Van Nuys has proven it so to our full satisfaction and we have many, many experiences to compare it to.

On the 17th of November, 1913, when we two girls took possession of this two and a half acre place, there was nothing on it but hay, and the small shack we had put up to live in. We had to grit our teeth and smile at what then seemed to be an impossibility—two city girls making a living and a pleasant home on two and a half acres of $750 an acre land.

Chickens looked best, so one of us rustled 240 good White Leghorn laying hens, at $1 each, while the other superintended the erection of a chicken house.

We were extravagant chicken house builders, overly so in fact, as our combination of California redwood and concrete cost us $270, but I believe the hens appreciated it. They started laying in January, and during the season we sold 6195 hatching eggs at 4 cents each, besides 234 dozen eating eggs that seem to always have a profitable waiting market.

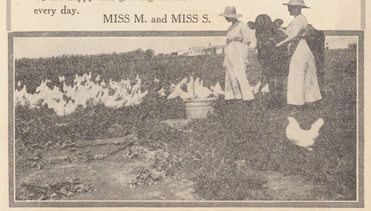
We haven't used all the market advantages available, nor even have we used all of the advantages offered by our two and a half acres. We did not come here for profit and do not intend to use intensified farming methods. Except for a miniature garden patch, our acreage grows to grass; part of it is in alfalfa that is irrigated with a garden hose.

In February we bought a cow for $100, and old Bess has made us a steady income of $17 per month ever since—$2.70 for feed per month, besides the grazing she gets off the place, keeps her plump and contented.

We haven't run behind since we started. The chickens keep us, besides keeping themselves and the pullets, and even with all that expense charged to them they lay by a little profit each month, and we figure the returns from the cow, and our easy outdoor life in the sunshine, as clear gain.

We could make good easy money from our place and the temptation is great to try. In fact, I really think it is being gradually yielded to, as our young chickens and fall garden indicate. To say the least, we are happy and growing healthier every day.

MISS M. and MISS S.



How the Valley Awoke

Nature years ago, filled this mountain sided basin deep with rich alluvial silt, provided it with ample water, and man, for a hundred and fifty years or more, has rudely farmed this fertile plain according to his ways and needs.

Pio Pico, the last of the Mexican Governors, and his friends, once owned it all. What the Yankees later bought it for is history. Sufficient to know it fattened well their herds and, later, when the missions fell, the new owners filled the dusty ruins with its grain, and gorged themselves, and lived content.

Five years ago a market called—the valley woke—a man responded with a plan—and modern progress put a spur to this lazy waste.

Now a 170-foot wide trolley-traversed, rose-bordered, paved, curbed and lighted boulevard winds its way through rich producing acres to Van Nuys, the day's journey of former years, now scarce an hour by trolley from Los Angeles.

The task is done, and home and plenty wait. Where five years ago the careless rancher perhaps made $5 an acre out of barley and hay, you now find many happy homes, well supported, by intensive cultivation, on five and ten-acre tracts.

Los Angeles' new aqueduct crosses the tract and it is possible that city water service may soon be brought to these rural residents. ~~Ample wells are had at small expense.~~

From Three Bales of Hay and a Job to 20 Acres and Plenty

It's twenty-five hundred miles from my costly dry farm experience in Idaho to this twenty acres and prosperity here in Van Nuys, and I've driven every foot of it behind the pair of blacks now standing in my stable.

I landed here in 1911, but I did not start for here in the first place. Months before I mustered up gumption enough to leave the losing game I was playing in Idaho, I read of Southern California advantages—doubted most of them, but longed to be there. Finally I decided to go, loaded household goods and the family into the big wagon (there were nine of us) and started.

Not an easy trip that, even in this civilized age. Imagine, among other things, feeling one's cash dwindle down at the rate a big family and a pair of hungry horses can bring it and not one single chance in sight to stop it.

One day in August right up here on what is now a paved, electric lighted, flower-lined, and trolley-traveled boulevard, I spent the last three dollars I had in the world for three bales of hay. They were building that highway then and offered me work—the first look at a real cash job I had had for months. Here we camped and here we have prospered.

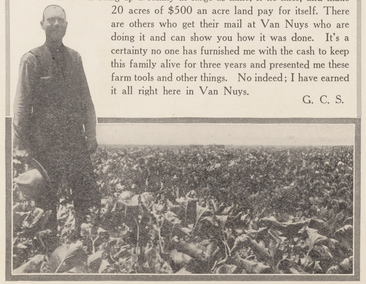
In the spring of 1912 I rented some ground, mostly young orchard land—the owners permitting me to farm the space between the trees. I put it into pumpkins and raised a thousand tons, found a market for two-thirds of them at $4.25 a ton without much effort, and began my plans for more diversified farming the next year.

Nineteen-thirteen saw me satisfied. With plenty of rented land in melons, tomatoes, pumpkins, potatoes and cantaloupes, and a 10-acre oat and barley piece that cut 33 tons of hay—with grain hay bringing $20 per ton—I was ready and able to start for myself; and this January just past I moved into my own eight-room bungalow on a 20-acre piece that I have promised to pay $500 an acre for.

There is no weather, soil, market, or water problem to reckon with. It is a case of plough the soft, moist soil and plant it to wisely selected crops. Markets are waiting, and nature takes care of the increase when man attends to his business.

I haven't been lucky,—there are two thousand opportunities as good as the one I grabbed this year, right here today, in this tract of 47,000 acres, where a man can bring up a family as large as mine, if he likes, and make 20 acres of $500 an acre land pay for itself. There are others who get their mail at Van Nuys who are doing it and can show you how it was done. It's a certainty no one has furnished me with the cash to keep this family alive for three years and presented me these farm tools and other things. No indeed; I have earned it all right here in Van Nuys.

G. C. S.



The San Fernando Valley and Van Nuys-Lankershim Tract

The San Fernando Valley lies four and a half miles northwest of Los Angeles, between the Sierra Madre mountains and the Santa Monica mountains. It is twenty-five miles long and six miles wide, running east and west.

The soil of this valley is a rich alluvial silt varying in depth from fifteen to fifty feet. Underneath this soil is a subterranean river. The rain and melted snow on the mountains sink into the ground at the edge of the valley and flow underground toward the city of Los Angeles. Los Angeles has for years obtained its water supply from this underground flow.

It does not rain in the valley from May to November. But rain is not needed. A surer source than rain is this never failing underground water supply.

All that is needed to keep the soil in perfect condition of moisture is to keep the surface stirred. This causes the moisture to be drawn to the surface by capillary attraction.

To one never having seen it, and not understanding, it will seem ridiculous; but on the ground it is easily proven. Just scrape the loose surface with your boot-heel and you can pick up loose, moist earth as fine as you ever saw.

Here is a most truly wonderful combination—rich soil, never failing moisture, and Southern California climate.

What it is and what it will do the Easterner cannot believe. It is literally true, as has been said, that "if you tell him the truth he will think that you have lied."

Californians know what the year around growing climate is and what it will do. They know that you can stick 'most anything in the ground—"either end up," as they say—and it will grow faster than the proverbial weed, all the year round, and attain great size and productiveness.

But, even Californians, most of them, don't know and understand the soil of this valley and how it is kept perpetually moist.

The Easterner can believe California only when he sees it, and the Californian can believe the facts about the soil and moisture in this valley only when he sees it.

If you know anything at all about Southern California climate, and if you can believe that these facts about the soil and moisture in this valley are true—and they are true—then you can see the foundation of this valley's wealth.

So much for the foundation—now what else has it?

The Southern Pacific spreads over the valley in fan-like shape with three lines, the Coast line to San Francisco, the San Joaquin Valley line to San Francisco, and the Chatsworth branch, which connects with the trunk line at each end of the San Fernando Valley.

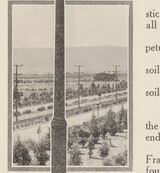
The old Kings Highway, El Camino Real, which is now a state highway, built of concrete, running from San Francisco to Los Angeles, skirts the south edge of the Van Nuys-Lankershim tract, running through the tract for fourteen miles, and enters Los Angeles through the beautiful suburb of Hollywood.

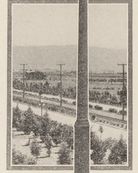
Running from the eastern boundary of the tract through Van Nuys, the center of the San Fernando Valley, and Owensmouth, near the west end, is Sherman Way—a double track boulevard sixteen miles long. One side is of asphalt for automobiles—the other of oil macadam for trucks.

The Pacific Electric operates its efficient trolley service in the middle of this way.

Three-light electroliers 330 feet apart line the way on either side all the distance.

Here, then, is a great suburban countryside having an unlimited wealth of soil and climate and the conveniences and advantages of a city suburb.





Think of Los Angeles, at this writing about 600,000 population and expected to be 1,000,000 in 1920—the most sought city in America. Think of this wonderful valley a short ride by trolley or automobile—just out of the side-gate of Los Angeles, as it were. Can you see the wealth of advantage here for persons who desire a little land, an ideal home, a sure profit from soil and market, and social advantages already attained?

Deciduous fruit, beans, sugar beets, melons, casabas, gardens and chickens are some of the leading successes of these suburban farms.

Think of a place where you can live out of doors all the year round, where roses line the way and cover the home at Christmas as in summer, where there is no cold, no drouth, where the mountains are your perpetual scenery, where the best of American cities is only "down town" to you, and where the grand ocean is only about twelve miles away.

On the left above is the Van Nuys depot of the interurban electric to Los Angeles. Cars reach the heart of the city in less than an hour.

On the right is the Van Nuys depot of the Southern Pacific Railroad. Both of these roads run through the center of the tract lengthwise.

In the bottom picture you see the $500,000 boulevard which also runs through the tract lengthwise. This boulevard was built and paid for by the original purchasers of the tract. It is 170 feet wide, including 30 feet of ornamental shrubbery on each side and a border of roses all the way.

In the foreground you see Satsuma plums, peaches and apricots, with the mountains in the background.

On the sides above are photographs of the electroliers which line the boulevard throughout and other glimpses of the boulevard passing through deciduous orchards.

On the left you see the grammar school and on the right the high school, both in Van Nuys. The first was built in 1911 and the other ~~is now under way (1914)~~

These pictures show you better than words the facts and advantages about the Van Nuys-Lankershim tract and the city of Van Nuys.

Made His Success with Fruit, Melons Casabas and Chickens

I didn't have anything to assure me I was on the right track when I signed the contract for these twenty acres two years ago, except my "know how" of farming. No one with little money had tried to succeed on a small piece of land out here at that time, but this deep, mellow soil that showed moisture a boot-heel deep, in July, got my attention. It wouldn't lump and a man could turn a moist clean-cut furrow 12 or 14 inches deep with a single horse any day of the year—July, August and September included.

My twenty is on the boulevard, half a mile north of the postoffice. I can look out my west door at night and see the street lights on the east and west boulevard as they stretch off for ten miles towards the mountains that separate us from the ocean, and I can step to the gate and see a similar sight winding off through town and for four miles south beyond. Its mighty true, electric lights and scenery don't grow profitable crops for a farmer, but they make his life more enjoyable while he is busy with nature, and I can't see that it costs as much to have such improvements as it does to be without them, considering the wife and all.

I picked the highest priced land in the tract, gave the soil a good, deep, thorough working, set out 2160 fruit trees (apricots, peaches and pears) that cost me $432, with the trees guaranteed for one year. I built a good brooder house along the north line and stocked it with 3000 good baby chicks; this cost me another $450. I put up a small but good barn that cost me $300. In April, I planted seventeen acres of my orchard to watermelons and the three remaining acres to casabas—planted them between the rows of trees; and then worked hard to make my investment grow.

The soil, a rich silt 25 feet deep, was clean of weeds and needed just enough cultivation to keep drawing the moisture up from beneath, no irrigation being necessary. The baby chicks grew fast and this ideal climate made their care a pleasure.

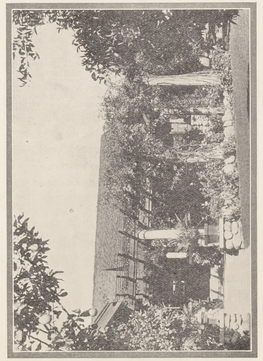
When the melons were shipped and all the expenses deducted that could possibly be charged to them, I had a thousand dollars clear.

December came and I cleaned up my casaba yield, which netted me $100 per acre—I mean over and above all expenses.

If I had excluded the trees and gone in for melons alone, last year I could have made at least a third more than I did. Or, if I had cut out the melons and devoted the tree rows to winter casabas, my income would have been double; but I plant what sells at times when money comes handy.

This year, as the picture shows, I am growing casabas where melons grew last, but I've got a start. I cleared $1700 above all expenses, have a healthy orchard, one year old, and all improving done besides. Now I can go in for a longer pull with a bigger profit at the end.

H. J. L.



One of the Glories of Southern California is the Beauty of its Homes. From Tiniest Bungalow to Pretentious Mansion, All Are Beautiful and No Two Are Alike.